ANIMADVERSIONS
ON
A Late PAPER
ENTITULED,
A LETTER to a DISSENTER,
upon occasion of his Majesties
late Gracious DECLARATION
of INDULGENCE.

By *H. C.* Henry Care

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ANIMADVERSIONS on a late PAPER entituled, *A Letter to a Diſſenter, &c.*

WHAT Severities towards the *Perſons*, what Havock and Devaſtations on the *Goods and Eſtates* of peaceable Engliſh Men, have ſome years paſt been practiſed by *ſtrained* Interpretations, and a rigorous Execution of the ſeveral **Penal Laws**, is ſure *too late* to be forgot by the *Sufferers*, too notorious to be denied by the *Actors*.

During this *Storm* the Diſſenters of all ſorts filled Earth and Heaven with loud and mournful Complaints, both of the Iniquity of *thoſe Laws*, and the *Perſecution* they thereby ſuffered; which was become ſo intolerable, that *many* actually tranſported themſelves to forreign Parts; *Multitudes more*, out of a ſenſe of their preſent hard uſage, or juſt apprehenſion of further Proſecutions, were *upon the wing* ready to fly at the firſt opportunity to the remoteſt Deſarts, chuſing by a voluntary Baniſhment from their *Native Country* to expoſe themſelves to all Hazards *abroad*, rather than continue under thoſe Evils which they either *felt* or *feared* at *home*. And as *Oppreſſion* is apt to make even *wiſe Men* mad, not a few diſtracted with theſe *frightful Idea's*, ſuffered themſelves to be embarqu'd in Deſigns no leſs *unwarrantable* in their own Nature, than deſtructive in the Event.

In the height of this *Conſternation*, and when no Intereſt but that of his Maj^ties^ own Princely Generoſity and the Publick-*Weal*, could neceſſitate him to it (the *Weſtern* Re-

bellion being cruſh't and all his Enemies at his feet) the KING was pleaſed to publiſh his *healing Declaration* for a general **Liberty of Conſcience**, together with the Grounds and Reaſons inducing him thereunto; it being no ſudden or *occaſional* Overture to ſerve a preſent turn, but the well weigh'd and long-confirmed Reſult of his *Royal Judgment*, which as he had *many years ago* declared on ſundry occaſions, *ſo* 'tis not unknown *to whom* we owe the *Retarding* thereof ſo long, and conſequently all the *Diſaſters* attending that unhappy Obſtruction.

By this *Gracious Declaration*, as his Majeſty did freely and fully eaſe all his *Nonconforming Subjects* from thoſe Preſſures under which they had groaned for ſo many years, and put them into an equal Capacity with the reſt of their Fellow-Subjects, to ſerve his Majeſty and their Countrey, without violating their *Conſciences*, (a natural *Birth-right-Priviledg*, which they were before debarr'd of) ſo he particularly expreſſed his Kindneſs to *that Party* who call themſelves, **The Church of England**, by his Royal Aſſurance, that they ſhould without any moleſtation, fully enjoy all *their Poſſeſſions*, as well as the *free Exerciſe* of their Religion.

Now who that conſiders Men as acting like *rational Creatures*, could have imagined but ſuch a very gracious Procedure, would have obliged all his Majeſties Subjects to a moſt *joyful Reſentment* of ſo vaſt a Favour?

Who would not have thought that the *Church-men* (who ſeemed to value themſelves upon nothing more than their *ſteady Loyalty*, and intire *paſſive Obedience*) ſhould have been extreamly pleaſed, that their Prince, though himſelf of a different Communion, was ſo far from putting them on the Practice of that *uneaſy Vertue*, as on the contary he vouchſafed ſo peculiar a regard of them, as to continue them in the Figure of the *National Church*, and ſure Enjoyment of

all their former *Advantages*, except that *unaccountable* one of forcing all others, (altho by deſtructive means, and dangerous to the Publick Repoſe) to conform to their particular *Schems*, which yet themſelves own to be *indifferent*.

At worſt, if they could be ſuppoſed capable of ſuch an unreaſonable *Peeviſhneſs*, as not to be ſatisfied, becauſe their Nails were pared, and they could not ſcratch their Neighbours ſo as heretofore; yet it could not be doubted but all the *Diſſenters* of whatever Denomination, would with the *higheſt Gratitude* receive ſuch an indearing Indulgence; the rather becauſe *His Majeſty* not only aſſured them of it for his *own Reign*, but engaged to do his part for continuing it to their *Poſterity*.

But as what is offered with the *Right* Hand is not ſeldom received with the *Left*; and the beſt Actions frequently happen to be traduced by the Siniſter Interpretations of thoſe that poſtpone the *Publique Tranquility* to their own pettiſh Humours, little *Self-Intereſts*, or perhaps only ſilly *Vanity* of appearing more ſagacious at the Politicks than their Neighbours. No ſooner was this *Incomparable Declaration* emitted, but ſome *rigid Churchmen* vext by a Spirit of *Pride* to think that their power of domineering ſhould be in the leaſt abbridged; and gaul'd with *Envy* to behold *Diſſenters* admitted to any degree of Royal Favour (which they hop'd to engroſs wholly to themſelves) ſtudying likewiſe by ſome *Wheadling Artifice* to manage the *Diſſenters* ſo, as that *they* ſhould expoſe themſelves to his Majeſties *juſt Diſpleaſure*, as a ſort of ſavage Animals, that like *Tygers* can never be rendred tame; Men that would not be quiet under any Government, but like *Trouts* muſt be always *ſwimming againſt the Stream*; People without *Conſcience*, *Reaſon* or *common Sence*; whom no Kindneſs could reclaim, no Clemency oblige (for in ſuch hideous Characters they always repreſented them;) and withal deſigning that the *Rods* which them-

themſelves had both procured, and ſo miſchievouſly *made uſe of*, might ſtill be reſerved *in Lavender* for a more opportune Juncture, in order to ſmarter Laſhes on all that will not truckle to whatever Ceremonies their Reverencies ſhould think fit to impoſe. Upon theſe and ſuch like Motives, I ſay, a ſtrange ſullen Murmur, and *grouling* Humour has ever ſince poſſeſs'd moſt of the violent Churchmen, to repine at or reproach His Majeſties Proceedings, to incenſe or amuſe the People with Fears and Jealouſies, and eſpecially to cajole the Diſſenters not to regard this Indulgence with that Reſpect they ought to do, or at leaſt to diſcourage them from contributing their ſhare towards rendring it perpetual.

To reach theſe Ends, the *Malecontents* aforeſaid have had their *Clubs*, and *Cabals*, and *little Aſſociations* acted by *united Councils*, not altogether perhaps uninfluenced by *forreign Correſpondencies* (as 'tis ſaid, they had once heretofore on ſomewhat alike occaſion) with ſome that have found *Liberty of Conſcience*, too advantageous *a Plant* to themſelves, to ſuffer it, by their good Wills to *thrive* anywhere elſe.

The high-flown Church-men have endeavoured to affright ſuch honeſt *Country Gentlemen*, as they thought Bigotted to their Eſtabliſhment, with Outcries, that this Indulgence will certainly blow up the *Church of England*, and then Good-night to the *Proteſtant Religion*, and ſo farewel to all their *Abbey-Lands*.

On the other ſide the *Latitudinarian* Divines, as being for their reported Moderation of greateſt Credit and Intereſt among the *Non-Cons*, have been inveigled by ſpecious Pretenſions, to amuſe and bug-bear the *Diſſenters* with a noiſe of the *Snake in the Graſs*; that the *Conſtitution* of *England* was *unhoop'd*, *all the Laws* of Civil Property ſhaken, by the King's diſpenſing with the *Penalties*, of theſe *Irreligious Religious* ones; that this Indulgence was only a *Scaffolding*

folding erected for the building up of *Popery*, which would be *thrown down* as ſoon as the *intended Structure* was compleat, *&c.*

Theſe Inſinuations were managed at firſt with *Caution*, till having (as they thought) by *private Whiſpers* ſufficiently prepoſſeſs'd their own Party, and created *preparative Jealouſies* amongſt others ; To crown the Work, out comes a Paper, called *A Letter to a Diſſenter*, &c. wherein all that *Wit* or *Malice* would rake together, to invenom Mens Minds with *falſe Impreſſions*, is muſter'd up, and boldly publiſhed to the World.

No ſooner was the *Preſs* delivered in Hugger-mugger of this *hopeful Brat*, but many *grave Dons* (appointed for that *Cue*) ſtood ready to admire and recommend its charming *Features :* Induſtriouſly were the Papers ſpread, (and ſome *Crape Gowns* appeared ſo fond of promoting it, as if they had a mind to play the *Interlopers* on the *Hawkers*) printed it was more than *once* or *twice*, and at laſt in a *ſingle Sheet* for Conveniency of Poſtage, that no Corner of the Land might be unattempted by this excellent Specimen of the Church of *England*'s Loyalty.

As for the *Author*, ſince he is ſo kind to himſelf, as to play Bo-peep with the *Publick*, under the Mask of a couple of *Letters* onely, I am not ſolicitous to enquire after either the Quality or Habitation of a *certain uncertain T. W.* whom perhaps I am never like to find ; nor did I certainly know the Gentleman, ſhould I deſcend to *Perſonal Reflections*, how obnoxious ſoever he might happen to be to them ; that is a *baſe and ſneaking* Practice uſed only by ſuch as thereby confeſs themſelves *over-match'd* in the Argument.

For this Reaſon too, I ſhall not qualify the Paper with any harſh *Epethites* ; whether it fall within the Statute of *falſe News*, or without it ; whether it ſhould be called *Libel-*

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lous or *Seditious*, or ſomewhat worſe, are Queſtions that belong not at all to my Province.

That which I apprehend my Duty (both as a diſintereſted *honeſt Man*, a *good Subject*, a hearty Lover of the future Peace of my Country, and a ſincere Profeſſor of, and *Well-wiſher* to the Proteſtant Religion, that it may be eſtabliſhed on ſuch a Foot as may for ever preſerve it free, both from the *danger* of being perſecuted, and the *ſcandal* of perſecuting any others) was to conſider the Purport and End of this Writer, and the Reaſons he offers; and ſince theſe, to the beſt of my Underſtanding, appear repugnant to all thoſe Obligations, I hope I may be allowed to offer my Conception thereupon without any juſt Offence; to antidote the *unwary* againſt thoſe *miſchievous Notions*, which I conceive he would *inſtil* into their Minds, under the Flouriſhes of a *gaudy Rhetorick*.

For it muſt be acknowledged, that this Pamphlet is wrote with a great deal of *Art*, full of pert Sallies of *Wit*, and *gay Language*, plauſible Expreſſions of *Kindneſs*, and a Stile altogether accommodated to amuſe and inveigle; but for *ſtrict Truth*, or *ſolid Arguments*, the Author has been pleaſed to *diſpenſe* with his Readers Expectations.

To premiſe thus much, I thought not altogether impertinent, that the *State of the Caſe* being rightly apprehended, we might have done the ſooner, and the Reader, if he pleaſe to diveſt himſelf for a while of Prejudice and partial Affections, may be the better enabled to judge of what is offered on either ſide: And ſo let us come to the matter.

Here's a Letter from *Some body* to a *Diſſenter*——Very good! What has the *illuſtrious* unknown *T. W.* to ſay to his humble *diſſenting Servant?* Why truly, after an envious Reflection on the late **Addreſſes** in general, and a fine-ſpun inſinuating *Banter*, he has a *pair of Advices* to communicate

to

to him; 1. *That he muſt ſuſpect his new Friends.* 2. *That he muſt not hazard the Publick Safety, neither by deſire of Eaſe, nor of Revenge.* To the *firſt* we can give no *Categorical* Anſwer till we better underſtand his meaning, which I ſhall enquire after by and by: But as for the *laſt*, I hope there is no *Diſſenter* in *England* but was before fully convinced that it was his Duty; and ſo the Gentleman might have ſpared the pains of his elaborate Letter in that reſpect. But he has alſo ſome *News* to tell him, *viz.* That the *Papiſts* always make their firſt Court-ſhip to the *Church of England*; That they are not in their Hearts ſo fond of the *Diſſenters*, as to their Principles, but civil to them, in regard their *Intereſts* at this Juncture happen to unite in *aliquo Tertio*, *viz.* A Repeal of the *Penal Laws*, under which they have *both* ſmarted, and are in danger to do ſo again; and that therefore *one Reaſon* (and perhaps with many, the *only Reaſon*) why they are content to allow them *Liberty*, is becauſe they would thereby get a little for *themſelves* and their *Poſterity.* Having made theſe *wonderful Diſcoveries*, our Author proceeds to open his Budget full of *Suppoſals*, mixt with known *Falſhoods*, and thence conjures up a parcel of horrid *Inferences*, and upon the whole concludes, that we *had as good be down-right Atheiſts*, as conſent to part with the *Penal Laws*;----And ſo he is, *dear Sir, your moſt affectionate humble Servant.*

This is the *Sum* and *Subſtance* of the Pamphlet, when ſtript of its *Top-knots* and Gallantry; and were not vulgar Ears more open to *Rhetorick* than *Logick*, there need no more be ſaid to expoſe its *Shallowneſs* and Vanity; but ſince the *Trifle* is become ſo celebrated, I ſhall briefly overhaul the Particulars.

His firſt Inſtruction to Diſſenters is, that *they have cauſe to ſuſpect their new Friends*; and have they none to ſuſpect their *old Enemies*? The truth is, the *Diſſenters* would glad-

ly be *Friends* with all their Fellow-ſubjects, that there might be an Union in *Affections*, and all the mutual Offices of *Juſtice* and *Humanity*, tho under different Apprehenſions about Matters of Religion; nor can they ſo much as gueſs at *any Expedient* able to accompliſh that glorious End, *viz.* To render both Governours and People eaſie and ſafe, by extirpating the otherwiſe *perpetual Feuds* and *Fears*, each Party muſt needs entertain againſt the other (thoſe infernal *Winds* which ſo often have raiſed *Storms*, and more than once *ſhip-wrack'd* Civil States.) And in a word, to *give God and Cæſar each his due*; Unleſs it be by a total Aboliſhment of thoſe *Penal Laws* (that have hitherto obſtructed all theſe Bleſſings) and eſtabliſhing *Liberty of Conſcience* on ſo firm a *Legal Baſis*, that it ſhall not be *in the Power* (how violent ſoever the Inclination may be) of any *one Party* to invade the Immunities of the reſt.

But this will not anſwer our Authors End; 'tis too plainly evident by this affected Term of *New Friends*, which runs through all his Paper, he principally means the *King*; who indeed has been the *beſt Friend* the Diſſenters ever had on this ſide Heaven; and yet ſome People are ſo *prodigiouſly ungrateful*, as to perſuade them not to *thank* him for't.

But if we muſt always miſtruſt *new Friendſhips*; then we muſt not credit the very late Pretenſions on behalf of the Church of *England*, that ſhe is ſorry for her *paſt Rigours, or will be more kind for the future:* With what *Forehead* does this Gentleman urge us to ſuſpect the *ſolemn repeated Promiſes* of our *SOVERAIGN* and yet at the ſame time expect we ſhould take his *bare Word*, who neither gives us his own *Name*, nor produces any *Commiſſion* from that *Church*, for what he undertakes in *Hers*?

But why muſt we needs *ſuſpect our King*? Is it becauſe amongſt the many *Royal Qualities* he is inveſted with; a *punctual Veracity*, and generous Diſdain of all little *tricking diſſem-*

diſſembling Arts, has been ſignally remarkable? No it is, becauſe *the Church of Rome cannot by her Principles allow Liberty to Hereticks*; and becauſe *the Men of Taunton and Tiverton are on a ſudden grown eminent for Loyalty*; and becauſe *the Quakers give the King Thanks with a* boon *Grace*:— Worthy Reaſons! But let's examine them apart.

As for the firſt, our Author exaggerates it with his uſual Floridneſs thus, *p.* 3. "This Alliance between "Liberty and Infallibility is bringing together the two "moſt contrary things that are in the World. The Church "of *Rome* doth not only diſlike the allowing Liberty, but by "its Principles it cannot do it. Wine is not more ex-"preſly forbidden to the *Mahumetans*, than giving Hereticks "Liberty to the *Papiſts*. They are no more able to make "good their Vows to you, than Men married before, and "their Wife alive, can confirm their Contract with ano-"ther. The continuance of their Kindneſs would be a "Habit of Sin, of which they are to repent, and their "Abſolution is to be had upon no other Terms, than their "Promiſe to deſtroy you:—— Thus He. And becauſe 'tis a *popular* Argument frequently made uſe of, I ſhall endeavour to give it a full Anſwer.

1. What the Church of *Rome*'s *Principles* are, or what by them ſhe *can*, *or cannot do*, I ſhall not here take upon me to determine; for many of her Principles are very *abſtruſe*, even this of *Infallibility*, ſhe has not been pleaſed to determine *where* and in *whom* particularly it reſides; and ſhe *can* do great things, as for example (if I am not * miſinformed) ſhe offerred once to allow of our *Common-Prayer-Book*, and that I hope you'l ſay was kindly done of her. Nor do I ſee any ſuch neceſſary Contrariety between *Infallibility* and *Liberty*; for though a Man ſhould think himſelf *Infallible*, (if any can in good earneſt think

* *See my Lord* Coke's *Charge given at* Norwich *Aſſizes*, 4 Aug. 1606. *4th page of the ſheet* F. *(for 'tis not paged.)*

think ſo) it does not follow, that he muſt beat, ſpoil or kill all that will not *own* ſuch his *aſſumed Infallibility*; at leaſt *Liberty* and *Infallibility* may agree, as well as we find by woful Experience *Conformity* hath done with *Nonconformity*; and if Diſſenters muſt be perſecuted, 'tis much alike to them, whether it be by a *Fellow Proteſtant* or a *Papiſt's* Hand; onely the former, Act ſomewhat the more *abſurdly* in Impoſing on others, ſince they confeſs they may perhaps be in the *wrong themſelves*.

2. But however theſe things may happen to be, 'tis plain the Gentleman does not here argue a *Propos*; for we have nothing to do with the *Church of Rome*, ſhe is no Party to the Tranſaction: The *Diſſenters* have never that I know of, entred into any *Treaty* about Reconciliation with her in Principles, whatever *others* have been nibbling at. Our Concern lies with a Prince, our *natural Soveraign*, who altho he be of that Communion, has ſolemnly avowed to all the World, *That it has been, and is his conſtant Senſe and Opinion, that Conſcience ought not to be conſtrained, nor People forced in Matters of meer Religion.* In purſuance of which Principle, his Majeſty has at preſent reſtrained the Execution of the *Penal Laws*, and aſſured the Diſſenters that they *ſhall enjoy the ſame Eaſe during his Reign*; and that he would be ready to contribute *His Part* toward rendring the ſame perpetual, both by repealing thoſe Laws, and confirming the *Right* of free Exerciſe of Religious Worſhip, and ſecuring by Law ſuch a ſetled and permanent Freedom of Conſcience from being invaded by any Party whatſoever for the future.

The Queſtion is, whether the Diſſenters ought not thankfully to embrace his Majeſties moſt Gracious Offer herein, and not be wanting on their part towards bringing it to effect? To which I ſhould anſwer affirmatively, and take it to be their *true Intereſt* and only Preſervative. For,

3. How

3. How far ſoever the Church of *Rome*'s Pretenſions to *Infallibility*, or her Averſion to thoſe ſhe calls *Hereticks* may extend, we find in fact, that it does not render all her Members ſo extravagant as to venture on Impoſſibilities, and act contrary to their own apparent *Intereſt*; *Quia deſunt vires* is allowed by their *hotteſt* Caſuiſts, a ſufficient Ground for *tolerating Hereticks*; elſe every one of her Sons ſhould be obliged under Pain of Damnation to *run a muck* againſt all Mankind that differ from her; whereas we ſee many places, where both *Papiſts* and *Proteſtants* live very quietly together, and that there have been and are Princes of the *Roman Creed* that have and do tolerate different Religions, without eſteeming themſelves ever the worſe *Catholicks*; nor does the Pope venture to excommunicate them on that account.

I doubt not but thoſe of the *Proteſtant Cantons* in *Switzerland* believe as much as any of our Diſſenters, that there is *Idolatry* in the Church of *Rome*; and there is no Queſtion but thoſe of the *Popiſh Cantons* believe the other to be *rank Hereticks*, yet they both in a friendly manner *coaleſce* into one and the ſame Republick, and live quietly together for their mutual Preſervation; neither the *miſcall'd Heretick* thinking himſelf bound to invade the Civil Rights of the ſuppoſed *Idolater*; nor the *imagined Idolater* once dreaming that he can never go to Heaven, without *a Promiſe* to *deſtroy his Neighbour*, becauſe he fancies him to be an Heretick.

Nor do the *Roman Catholicks* of the *United Provinces* (whoſe Numbers are not inconſiderable) eſteem themſelves bound to cut their Compatriots *Throats*, but on the contrary, have as vigorouſly as any drawn their *Swords* (even though againſt the moſt *Catholick* King) in defence of their *common Liberties.*

By

By all these and many other like instances that might be given, it appears that *Roman Catholicks*, notwithstanding their Principles, can sometimes live very *sociably* with *Protestants*, where their common *Safety* and *Interest* requires it; And that this is their case in *England*, shall presently be shewn.

But in the mean time, this may serve in some measure to answer and take off that vulgar reproach now commonly thrown at *Dissenters*, that *they joyn with Papists to set up Popery, by destroying the Church of England*; Of which Charge neither Branch is true; they joyn not with Papists to *set up*, but rather to keep *down* Popery, and not to *destroy* the Ch. of *England*, but rather to *establish* it upon firm and lasting Grounds; To give every Party their *Right* in an uninterrupted Freedom of Conscience, and prevent any of them from using Violence to the other. To joyn with People of another Persuasion in a certain respect where our several Interests happen to unite, may be done without the just scandal of favouring their Opinions, so when the Pope expostulated with *Cardinal d'Ossat* Ambassador from King *Henry* the *4th* of *France*, that his Master had entred into an Alliance with the *Dutch*, who were *Hereticks*, to the danger of the Church; that most prudent *Minister of State* replied, "That his *Holiness* need not wonder how *in Reason of State* "those of *different Religions* might joyn together for *Poli-* "*tical Ends*, without hazard of altering Religion; thus "*David* sought Protection of the *Philistines*, and *Abraham* "redeemed the *sinful Sodomites*; That he took it to be up- "on the same Ground, that his *Holiness* himself not long be- "fore received a Persian Ambassador, who was so far worse "than an *Heretick*, that he never pretended to the Name "of a *Christian*.——With which Reason the Pope was pleased to acquiesce.

Whatever *Principles* bigotted People may have advanc'd, wise Princes have, and always will endeavour to act according

ding to *Reaſons of State* and their true *Intereſt*. The Poets tell us, that the Gods eſteemed themſelves obliged by no Oath, but when they *ſwore by Styx*: The *judicious Bacon* mythologizes it thus, that though ſome Princes ſcorn to be Slaves to their Words, yet when their *Intereſt* runs parallel with their *Promiſes*, you may rely upon their Performance.

To remove our Suſpicions in this caſe, we have not only the greateſt *verbal* Aſſurances that can be given from the moſt ſteady and generous of Princes, but alſo the concurrence of his *Intereſt*, together with that of all thoſe of his *Communion*. It is *His* Intereſt, as to begin, ſo to *continue* Liberty of Conſcience; as it allays *Animoſities*, ſecures his own *Peace*, encreaſes *People*, augments *Trade*, advances his Royal Revenue. And to ſettle it upon an *impregnable Foot*, ſeems the greateſt Kindneſs he can do thoſe of his *own* Perſuaſion; to give them any Encouragement to hope further, will certainly embroil his Affairs, and in the End may probably occaſion ſome great Diſaſter on that Party; They being at moſt not much above one in ſixty, nay perhaps not one in a hundred, (for I conceive our Author may too much under-calculate, when he makes them but one in two hundred) in number compared with the reſt of his Subjects; the Force of which over-Proportion is alſo much augmented by their inbred Averſion to *Popery*, than which nothing can be more viſible throughout the Nation; whereunto add that the next *Heirs* in proſpect are both *Proteſtants*, and beſtowed in *Proteſtant Alliances*, which muſt needs unravel all the Web, and perhaps before it may be compleatly woven.

So that if any of the warmer *Religious Orders* ſhould think of puſhing on any preſent Advantages, ſo far as to make *theirs* the *National* Religion; as they are moſt unlikely to ſucceed in ſuch a raſh Attempt, ſo the *Nobility* and *Gentry*

of their Party, and all that have *Eſtates* (who muſt ride out any contingent Storm and ſtand *at mark*, whilſt others may retreat to *ſafe Covert* abroad) cannot be ſo dull as not to foreſee that whether they *fail* or *proſper* at preſent, they muſt certainly expect to pay for it *ſeverely* hereafter, and they cannot tell *how ſoon*, therefore will undoubtedly be cautious of countenancing any ſuch *precipitate Meaſures*; but rather being content with the Liberty of their *own Conſciences* and enjoyment of their Natural *Priviledges* in common with their Fellow-ſubjects, will adjoyn their Endeavours towards tranſmitting that *Eaſe* and *Happineſs* to their Poſterity, upon ſo comprehenſive a Foundation, that it ſhall be the *General Intereſt* of the Nation to perpetuate it.

It may therefore upon the whole matter, be moſt *reaſonably*, as it ought moſt *dutifully* be believ'd, That his Majeſty's *reiterated Promiſes* deſerve our entire Confidence; That a Prince ſo *Wiſe* and *Generous* will not expoſe both his own Eaſe and Grandeur, the *Repoſe* of his Realms, the Honour of his *Name*, nay the Honour of his *Religion*, together with the *future Safety* of all that profeſs it in theſe Realms, to ſuch inevitable hazards; But rather that he intends (as he has frankly declared) *no more* than to make his Reign *eaſy* to Himſelf, and All his People, To leave thoſe of his own Perſuaſion (as well as others) in a Condition leſs Burdenſom than for ſome Reigns paſt; And by theſe ſweet and gentle Methods at once ſecure the *future Tranquillity* of his Kingdoms, and raiſe a perpetual Monument of his own *Wiſdom* and *Clemency*, whereunto His great *Experience*, as well as natural Goodneſs do diſpoſe him; The paſt Example of a *mighty Monarchy* reduced to a great Declenſion chiefly by the Maxims of an over-zealous *Fierceneſs*; Or that more Modern and Terrible One of *Another* (the Conſequencies of which may perhaps be

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foreſeen without Conſulting *Aſtrology*) are no very inviting Precedents for a prudent Prince to follow; eſpecially when the Difficulties *here* are ſo much more inſuperable than they were in either of *them*.

But after all this very Queſtion, whether we ſhall *truſt* or *ſuſpect*, is in Truth impertinent, and has no room in our preſent Caſe. His Majeſty, though he well *deſerves*, is yet ſo gracious as not to *require* our Confidence *gratis*, he offers a *legal Eſtabliſhment* of our common Religious Freedom; you ſhall have at the ſame inſtant as good Security as can be deviſed, provided Terms be not inſiſted on, that are naturally repugnant to *that Liberty* intended to be Confirmed; For if it be not *General*, it cannot be Effectual; But by a General Security equally including *All* Parties, the Fears and Jealouſies of *Each* muſt vaniſh, and their ſeveral Intereſts *Concentre* to continue Inviolable: For whatever may be the Deſires and Inclinations of *Roman Catholicks*, 'tis certainly their *Intereſt* to ſecure themſelves with the Multitude; And if it prove a Security to *Them*, 'tis ſo to others: If not to *others*, it will likewiſe *fail* them when they may need it; Therefore they are as much concern'd as any, to make a *ſound Proviſion*. That which defends the Whole, preſerves every Part; But a Partial Security is imperfect and dangerous.

As to the Particulars, or *Modalities* of ſuch Security, 'tis the Work of the *Great Council of the Kingdom*: And as it would be a *ſawcy Vanity* for a private Perſon to preſcribe, ſo it can be no leſs *Preſumption* in any to ſay, That the *Wiſdom of the Nation* can find no Expedients inſtead of the *Teſts*, which without being (like them) appropriated to the Intereſt of a *ſingle* Party, or invading Mens Civil Rights or Priviledges for Matters of Conſcience (as they do) may yet no leſs, nay more effectually prevent all Apprehenſions of any one Parties over-running the reſt. If

Laws be *no Security*, then the Controverted *Laws* and *Teſts* are *none*: if they be, then why may not *another* Legal Proviſion, *better*, becauſe more comprehenſive, and founded on more equal and reaſonable Principles, ſecure us All as well as *Thoſe*? Theſe Reaſonings to my mean Apprehenſion, ſeem not inconſiderable; but the whole is with all deference ſubmitted to the conſummated Prudence of his Majeſty and his *two Houſes of Parliament*, when he ſhall think fit to convene them.

The *Letter Writer*'s next Suggeſtion why we ought to *diſtruſt*, is, becauſe ſudden Changes are not natural, and how miraculous a thing it is, *That the Men of* Taunton *and* Tiverton *ſhould now be above all other eminent for Loyalty*.--- Good Sir! Either ceaſe, or encreaſe your Aſtoniſhment; there are other ſtrange violent *Metamorphoſes* abroad, altogether as ſurpriſing; the old Declaimers againſt *Fears* and *Jealouſies* become the buſieſt Promoters of them; the former Magnifiers of *Prerogative* ſwagger for *Magna Charta*; they that have an hundred times avowed, that they had rather be *Papiſts* than *Presbyterians*; they that have ſpent their *beſt breath* for more than twenty years in Invectives againſt *Diſſenters*, and promoted the moſt violent Proſecutions againſt them, as often as the Government did not reſtrain them, *are now* (if your News *pag.* 10. be true) *overflowing with the ſpirit of Peace, Charity, and Condeſcenſion. And all their former Haughtineſs is for ever extinguiſhed.*

This is certainly a *ſudden* unexpected Change, and therefore we are inclinable to take your Advice *pag.* 3. and *pauſe a while before we believe it*; for ſince we are ſatisfied our *Features are not altered*, we are apt to conclude, *neither is your Opinion of us, whatever may be pretended.*

We forget not the Affairs of *Taunton* and *Tiverton*, and could ſay there were *more than Diſſenters* concern'd; but ſuppoſe them ſuch, were it not the Severities which they had alrea-

already ſuffered from the *Church of England*, and thoſe more aſtoniſhing ones, they were made believe they muſt *unavoidably encounter* under a *Roman Catholick Prince* (the *very thing* continued to be inſinuated in this *Paper*) that plung'd and hurried them into that *deſperate Defection?* And when by his Majeſties *Gracious Declaration* they were ſecur'd from thoſe diſmal Apprehenſions, could leſs be expected than that returning to their Duties, they ſhould expreſs themſelves *eminent for Loyalty?* Is it any *wonder* that the *Cauſe ceaſing, the Effect ſhould alſo ceaſe?* Or can we think that Goſpel-ſaying a *Paradox*, *That thoſe to whom much has been forgiven, ſhould love much?*

Let us not flatter our ſelves, or *calumniate* others; Rebellion and Loyalty (as one has well obſerv'd) ſubſiſt not ſo much in Parties as *Perſons*; Good, that is, *true Chriſtian* Principles, are excellent Qualifications to advance the Peace of *Civil Government:* but ſince the Majority of thoſe that profeſs them, rarely walk up to thoſe *ſelf-denying Rules*; if we turn over Hiſtories, and ſurvey the Tranſactions of the World, 'twill appear that the Intereſt of Societies is *that* which generally ſecures their Obedience. That Government which protects *moſt*, and leaves *feweſt* uneaſy, being likely to be freeſt from *Diſcontents*, and conſequently from *Diſturbance*; for when all is done, the Magiſtrate that *protects* and *cheriſhes* any ſort of People in his Dominions, may juſtly require their Service, and ſafely rely upon their *Obedience*; But if he perſecute them, whether *Papiſts*, Church of *England-Proteſtants*, or *Diſſenters*, though perhaps he may violently force many of them to an *outward Compliance*, yet he can never prudently reſt upon their *Affections*.

As for the *Quakers* (on whom our *facetious* Author is pleaſed to exerciſe his *merry Vein*) if any have been ſo cenſorious as to declare them not to be *Chriſtians*, yet they themſelves profeſs the contrary, and have patiently under-

gone Sufferings *equal* at leaſt with any other Party, to make good their Claim to that Title, however they are *Men*, and on that ſcore, leading peaceable inoffenſive Lives, ought to be free from Perſecutions, or being compelled by outward *Force* to a Religion that can only be propagated and entertain'd by *Love*; And alſo, if they deſerve it, may be made uſe of, and *preferred* in Civil Matters as well as others; ſince we, and I think moſt other Nations of the Chriſtian Name refuſe not to ſuffer *Jews* to live quietly amongſt us, notwithſtanding they are *open Denyers* of our ever bleſſed Saviour.

Hitherto we find this Author's Arguments of *no force* to perſuade us to abandon our *Intereſts* and *Duty*, which are both inſeparably *wound up* in our lawful endeavours to get the *Penal Laws* repeal'd.---But if he cannot delude us with *Sophiſtry*, he will affright us with *Mormo's* and *Hobgoblins:* Give him leave but to *ſuppoſe for you*, and then if you do not *run out of your Wits*, he pronounces *your Courage too dangerous a Virtue to be commended.*

But as he offers no proofs for his *Suppoſals*, ſo they are founded neither on *Truth* nor *Probability.* He imagines ſome *criminal Alliance* between the Roman *Catholicks* and *Diſſenters*, when there is nothing more than a joint Concurrence (promoted by their Common Intereſt, and juſtified by the firſt Principles of *Religion, Reaſon*, and *Policy*) to remove unwarrantable and oppreſſive *Shackles* upon Conſcience, and withal at the ſame time advance ſuch a *Legal Eſtabliſhment* as may ſecure, not only themſelves, but all others too, in their Rights, both as *Men* and *Chriſtians.*

And what need was there of any *Mediators* armed with Power of giving *Encouragements* and *Rewards* to induce Men to ſuch an innocent undertaking, no leſs advantagious to all others (nay more to the *Church-men*) than themſelves?

As Part of this Alliance or an *Effect* thereof, 'tis plain, he reckons

reckons the Diſſenters returning of *Thanks* to his Majeſty for his Declaration of *Indulgence*, and then at once to caſt an inſolent *Reflection* on his Majeſty, or his Miniſters of State, and to expoſe the diſſenting Miniſters as Mercinaries, ſuch as act not upon Principles of Conſcience or Honour, but may eaſily be drawn by a little Money to any lewd Compliance, although to the Ruin of the Proteſtant Religion, and Subverſion of all our Municipal Laws, and the very Conſtitution of our Engliſh Government, (for elſewhere he brands *Addreſſing* with no leſs miſchievous Tendencies, ſee *pag.* 9. & 10.) He proceeds to advance two moſt *ſcandalous Charges.*

The firſt, *pag.* 5. by way of Suggeſtion, as if *ſome* (formerly implied in a like Negotiation) had now *by Authority, ſprinkled Money among the Diſſenting Miniſters.*

The other, *pag.* 7. in a poſitive Affirmation, *That the firſt Draughts of the Addreſſes* (he ſpeaks generally, *that fly abroad every Week*, and with an Air of Scorn and Malice, *---murther us with another to the ſame*) are made by the Prieſts [which cannot otherwiſe be meant than of *Roman Prieſts*] and that the *Diſſenters Part is only to Write them out fairer.*———[His Kindneſs it ſeems will allow them to be the *better Scribes*, tho *ſuch Dunces* as not able to expreſs their *own Thoughts* ſo well as certain *inviſible Fathers* who know nothing of them.]

Now if both theſe, be (as I dare, with all aſſurance, averr, they are) utterly falſe, then I hope the World will partly underſtand the *Temper* of the *Writer*, and *Deſign* of his Paper, and entertain both with that *Abhorrence*, due to one that regards neither *Reſpect* to his *Prince*, nor *Juſtice* towards his Neighbours, nor any Meaſures either of *Charity* or *Truth* or common Honeſty; ſo he may but reach his ends, of dividing the Diſſenters amongſt themſelves, and expoſing them all to the *Contempt* and Hatred of others; fomenting Miſapprehenſions and Jealouſies, thereby to frame an *Engine* both for their *Ruin*, and for continuing the exorbitant Power of *that Party* for whom he is an Advocate. But

But how do we demonſtrate that there is no Truth in the Particulars he hints at? I confeſs it is impoſſible *apodictically* to prove ſuch an univerſal Negative; but if offering as much towards it as the *nature of the thing* will bear, may be ſufficient, I doubt not but to ſatisfie all the impartial World.

1. The manner of our Author's talking, argues a Conſciouſneſs of *Guilt*, and has all the natural Features of a *Libel*; nothing aſſerted, but blind Hints, and *Innuendo's* thrown out; Baits fair enough to catch *Gudgeons*, and make them ſwallow the *Calumny*; but yet ſo cautiouſly worded, as to ſecure a *Retreat* when taxed with down-right *Slander*. His *Hypotheſis* he thought, might amuſe, but where is his *Aſſumption* that ſhould prove? *If thoſe Men that formerly ſprinkled Mony amongſt the Diſſenting Miniſters, ſhould* (ſays he) *by the SAME AUTHORITY now do the like, and diſburſe where they cannot otherwiſe perſuade.*— He ought to have added;— *But thoſe very Men have now done the ſame,*——— which being proved, and not till then, he might have inferred (as he does) *that it ſeems rather an Evidence than a Preſumption of the Deceit*; Whereas now, his Diſcourſe is a Rope of incoherent Sand, and may thus, and much better be retorted,——— If this Author have only *dreamed*, or *invidiouſly forged* this Suppoſal, as is highly probable, becauſe he produces no Teſtimony for it, (which in Reaſon it muſt be thought he would have done, could he have procured any) then 'tis rather an Evidence than Preſumption of Deceit, and ſomething elſe which I am not willing to expreſs by its proper Name.

2. This Inſinuation about ſprinkling of Mony conſiſts of two parts: 1. That ſuch a thing was once, and by Authority too, done formerly, to the Diſſenting Miniſters. 2. The like again now by the very ſame Men.——Here we are left altogether in the dark *when*, or how long ago this *formerly* was; but it ſeems 'twas within Memory, becauſe by the ſame Negotiators. Now I do well remember, that Dr. *Owen* in the

the Preface to a Book, Intituled, *An Enquiry, &c.* partly in Answer to the Reverend Dr. *Stillingfleet's* Discourse of the Unreasonableness of Separation, printed *Anno* 1681, takes notice of a Report then advanced, "*That the* Nonconformists "*some of them at least, do receive, or have received Money from* "*the Papists to act their Affairs, and promote their Interest.* And then he tells the world, "*That 'tis such a malicious frontless* "*Lye as Impudence it self would blush at, That those by whom* "*it was first whispered probably understood better than the* Non-"conformists *what influence* Money, *or the things which they* "*knew how to turn into it, had into their Profession and Actings* "*in Religion*; Whereunto he adds (I had almost said *prophetically*) these words, "☞ It seems to me that some such Men "are afraid, lest the present Opposition unto Popery should "issue in **such an Establishment** of the Protestant Religion, "as that hereafter it should not be in the disposal of any, "nor in their Power to make a Bargain of it, either for their "Advantage, or in their Necessity.

And a little after, speaking of *Dissenters*, He says, "How-"ever they may be Traduced or Accused, they will continue "in giving the highest Security that Conscience, Profession, "Principles, Interest and Actions can give of their Stability "in the same [Protestant] Cause; only they desire to be "excused, if they make not use of this notable Engine for "opposing of Popery, namely, the stirring up of Jealousies, "Fears and Animosities amongst Protestants, which others "judg serviceable to that End.

And in the next Page, "Because I know my self herein "peculiarly reflected on, I do avow, That never any one "Person in Authority, Dignity, or Power in the Nation, "Nor any one that had any Relation to Publick Affairs, "nor any from them, Papist or Protestant, did once speak one "Word to me, or advise with me, about any Indulgence or "Toleration to be granted unto Papists; I challenge all the

 "World

" World who are otherwiſe minded, to intermit their Service " for a ſeaſon unto the great falſe Accuſer, and prove the " contrary if they can; The Perſons are ſufficiently known " of whom they may make their Enquiry.

Thus that *Learned Worthy Man*.---And can any Body that knew him, judg that he would either in Piety or Prudence print at ſuch a rate (in a time when *enow* would have been ready to detect it), if what he ſo *amply* and *earneſtly* denies had in it any Colour of *Truth*?

Yet ſince he remarks, it was at that time become a publick *Slander*, 'tis highly probable *this* was what *our Author* would hint at, in the firſt Branch of his Suppoſition, if at leaſt he thereby *meant any thing*, or had ſo much as any old *baffled Story* whereon to ground the Figment; For, perhaps, we ſhall wrong the Gentlemans Invention, not to aſcribe it altogether to his *own teeming* Imagination.

3. *Non Entis nullæ ſunt Affectiones*, If there were no ſuch *pecuniary ſprinklings* heretofore, then none *now*, according to the *Letter-writers* own Account, for he ſuppoſes the latter to be done by the *ſame Inſtruments*, *and in the ſame Methods*; And ſo all his *Tattle* about *Miniſters who having fallen under ſuch Temptations*, *are engaged to continue their Frailty*, *by the Awe they are in*, *leſt it ſhould be expoſed*, *&c.* becomes inſignificant.

4. If there were any ſuch Artifices of *Bribing Miniſters*, or of having *Addreſſes penn'd by Jeſuits*, or other Popiſh Prieſts, *ſent to Diſſenters* whoſe part was only to *Copy*, *Sign*, *and Preſent them*, it is moſt reaſonable to believe, That ſuch Intrigues muſt be practiſed upon thoſe that *moſt early* Addreſſed, to the end others might be invited to follow. But ſo far is this from any Reſemblance of Truth, That the *firſt Addreſſers* in this kind, were ſo ſcrupulous as not to impart their Intentions to any but thoſe of their *own Communion*, till the Form was adjuſted and agreed upon amongſt themſelves.

And

And for the full *Detection* of any ſuch Practices as are inſinuated, I have *Commiſſion* from Perſons ſufficiently able to anſwer ſuch an Engagement, *to Advertiſe* and *Aſſure* all the World,

That if any Perſon or Perſons can make appear either, That there was any Money, or Moneys worth whatſoever, directly or indirectly, Given, Promiſed, or Propounded to any of the Perſons that did firſt Addreſs, viz. That of the Baptiſts, that of the Presbyterians, or that of the Congregational Perſuaſion of London, to diſpoſe them, or any of them, to make ſuch Addreſs; Or that there was any Draught or Copy of any of the ſaid Addreſſes, or any part thereof (drawn by any Perſon or Perſons, other than ſome of thoſe that Subſcribed the ſame reſpectively) ever ſent, ſhewn, or propoſed to any of the Subſcribers, That then the Perſon or Perſons making ſuch Diſcovery, ſhall, upon his or their Application to the Bookſeller, whoſe Name and Habitation is hereunto prefix'd, receive Directions where, and of whom, He or They, and every of them making ſuch Diſcovery, may and ſhall (beſides moſt hearty Thanks) have, and be honeſtly and Bonâ Fide paid a Reward of Fifty Pounds of Lawful Money of England.

The reſt of his Suppoſals are of the *ſame Leaven* both for *Truth* and *Charity*. Who are *thoſe Diſſenters*, and on what part of the *Globe* do they dwell, (for ſure they muſt be *Antipodes* to *Ours*) that Preach up *Anger and Vengeance againſt the Church of England?* That are *under a Contract which obliges them upon a Forfeiture, to make uſe of Inflaming Eloquence?* That apprehend *their Wages would be retrench'd, if they ſhould be Moderate?* ——Quite contrary, they have, with a moſt *Chriſtian Moderation*, ſo far overcome the Reſentments of their paſt *hard Uſage*, or *preſent Provocations*, that they treat *that Church* with all Friendlines and Reſpect;

but think they mean her *no Harm* when they wiſh thoſe *dangerous Weapons* out of Her hands, which ſhe has ſo long Indiſcreetly made uſed of, onely to *ruine other* innocent People, and *ſtab* Her *own Reputation.*

Does this Sir Politick *T. W.* or *W. T.* (for ſome Criticks think that the truer Reading) imagine Liberty of Conſcience, or Freedom to Worſhip our Creator in *ſuch manner* as we are convinc'd to be moſt agreeable to *his Will*, without being *jailed* or *undone* for the ſame; and without being ſcarr'd by ſevere Temporal Penalties, to joyn Externally and Hypocritically in a Religious Worſhip, which our Conſciences tell us is Sinful? Does he, I ſay, conceit this noble Priviledg, ſo *cheap and vile a thing* that none will appear for it, but ſuch as are either *ſuborned* with Money, or have deſerved to be *Hang'd?* Is it not a pretty Notion, and much-becoming a *Stateſman*, That thoſe who chiefly to aſſert Liberty of Conſcience (tho in a very bad and irregular way) incurr'd the Want of a *Pardon*, muſt after ſuch Pardon obtain'd, needs Act againſt their Conſciences, if they offer to perſwade any to endeavour the ſetling ſuch Liberty regularly in a *Legal Courſe?*

Nor is his next *politick Squint* leſs impertint, as if *one Prince* might not for Reaſons of State continue Friendſhip with another, whoſe Conduct in ſome Particulars he highly *diſapproves*; nor know I how, in that caſe, he can more effectually declare ſuch diſlike, than by ſteering a direct contrary Courſe himſelf.

His Noiſe of Solliciting *Addreſſes*, the *Tyring* of *Poſt-Horſes* with *Circular Letters*, and *Threatning*, where *Perſwaſions* would not ſerve to procure them, is all but the Product of a very *bold Imagination*; and he has been ſufficiently challenged, to give but *one ſingle Inſtance:* Sure the Gentleman is Maſter of no great Stock of *Gratitude* at home, that he can think the whole Nation ſo wondrous Barren of it, on

one

one of the moſt *glorious Occaſions* that ever were given for that *good natured Vertue* to diſplay it ſelf.

Rather than fail of advancing *Jealouſies*, he ſeems willing to contradict himſelf, as well as Truth; and both complains of the Diſſenters for their *Forwardneſs*, and yet would have the Word believe they were very *Backward* in *Addreſſing*.—— But ſtill, wherein, I pray, lies the Harm of the thing it ſelf, that either there ſhould need ſuch Variety of Artifices to draw in the *Unwilling*; or that can render them *criminal* that did with all ready Zeal make thoſe Grateful Acknowledgments? This he undertakes to tell us, *Pag.* 8. and 9. (for I follow the *firſt Edition*) and the Sum of his Diſcourſe amounts to neither more nor leſs than *This:*

That the King's Declaration for Liberty of Conſcience was an IRREGULAR ACT, [Very Dutifully ſpoken!] *therefore the* Diſſenters *ought not to have taken any Notice of it, but to have forborn the Publick Exerciſe of their Religion, till a Parliament had allowed it,* [which if he and his Aſſociates can help it, ſhall never be.] *But ſince they did not onely receive the Benefit Granted, but publickly return his Majeſty Thanks for it, they thereby give a Blow to all the Laws by which their Religion and Liberty are to be Protected, and fall foul upon* Magna Charta, [Which *Chapter* of it, I beſeech you Sir?] *gave up their Right in the Laws; for after giving Thanks for the Breach of one Law, they loſe the Right of Complaining of the Breach of all the reſt.*

This is *ſad News!* but as good Luck would have it, there is not one Article of it *True*; for the King's Declaration was in it ſelf, not only a very pious, prudent and gracious, but (according to the ancient Conſtitution of this Realm) a moſt *Legal Act.* The *Diſſenters* had been the moſt *inexcuſably*

ſably Peeviſh People in the World, if they had not accepted of it, the *moſt Ungrateful* if they had not Thankfully acknowledged it, and will be the moſt *ſtupid Neglecters* of their own Intereſt, both *Religious* and *Civil*, if they do not exert all their Endeavours towards having it Eſtabliſhed for Poſterity by a *Law*.

Upon this occaſion it may be expected, that I ſhould enter into a long Diſcourſe in Affirmance of his Majeſties *Right* to Diſpenſe with Cœrcive Laws *in Matters of Religion:* But ſince that is already done by a *far better Hand*, in a *Juſt Treatiſe*, (which may poſſibly er'e long ſee the Light) I ſhall not *actum agere*, or inlay my *Copper* with that *Noble* Author's *Gold*; but content my ſelf to ſay in general,

1. That as it was the Right of our *Engliſh Kings* by the *Common Law*, ſo it has been confirmed to them by ſeveral *Statutes*; and they have accordingly exerted it time out of mind; and particularly 'tis reſerved to the *Crown* by the Statute of 22 *Car* 2. Cap. 1. *For preventing and ſuppreſſing Seditious Conventicles*; in theſe Words: ——— **Provided, That neither this Act, nor any thing therein contained, ſhall extend to invalidate or avoid his Majeſties Supremacy in Eccleſiaſtical Affairs; But that his Majeſty and his Heirs and Succeſſors may from time to time, and at all times hereafter, exerciſe and injoy all Powers and Authority in Eccleſiaſtical Affairs as fully and as amply as himſelf, or any of his Predeceſſors have, or might have done the ſame; Any thing in this Act notwithſtanding.**

2. As to what is alledged touching all other Laws, being by this *Precedent* ſhaken; and that ſuch as give Thanks for the Breach of *One Law*, preclude themſelves from Complaining of the Breach of all the reſt; becauſe on the like Ground the King may *Repeal* any other *Statutes* without Common Conſent in *Parliament*. ——— It may readily be anſwered (beſides what has been already pointed at in the foregoing

Paragraph)

graph) That there is a great difference between *Repealing* a Law, and relaxing or diſpenſing with the *Penalty*; the firſt can only be done in Parliament, the latter has been always adjudged to be part of the *Royal Prerogative*. For example, the Law dooms every Perſon convicted of *Burghlary* or *picking a Pocket*, to die: Our Kings have frequently in all times remitted the *Execution:* Was this ever thought to be a Repeal of thoſe Laws? or any Infringment of all the reſt?

And if it be ſo in Civil Caſes, wherein the Subject is concerned in the Injury, and where the Matter to be reſtrained by the Laws, is not only *Malum prohibitum*, but *Malum in ſe*, not meerely *evil*, becauſe forbidden, but *forbidden* becauſe intrinſecally *evil*; Then (*a fortiori*) much more ſtrongly it follows, That his Majeſty may ſuſpend the Execution of the Penalties, which by *theſe Laws* relating to Eccleſiaſtical Affairs, are inflicted on *Actions* or *Defaults* ſo far from being in themſelves *Criminal*, That a very great part of them are undoubtedly allow'd by the Laws of *God*, *Nature*, and *Reaſon*.

And ſo much the rather may his Majeſty exert this Right, ſince theſe Penal Statutes generally in their *Preambles* (which are *Claves Legum*, the *Keys* that open to us the *Occaſion*, and conſequently the main *Scope* and End of Enacting them) affirm that they were made for the Security of the Princes *Perſon*, and to prevent *Treaſon*, *Inſurrections* and *Sedition*; ſo that his Majeſty is principally and immediately concern'd therein; and ſince he muſt be allowed the beſt Judg of his *own Security*, if he ſhall find that there is *no need* of putting *ſuch Statutes* in Execution to that End; but rather that the *Non-Execution* thereof will more conduce to his Safety, and the publick Repoſe; and therefore thinks fit to *ſuperſede* or forbear the exacting the Penalties, where is the wrong? To whom the Injury?

So

So that hitherto neither was the King's Declaration an *Irregular Act*, nor the Diſſenters Thanking him for it, any ſuch deſperate Buſineſs as to make them *forfeit their Right in all other Laws* of their Country; but moſt true it is, that whilſt theſe *Church-driving Laws* ſtand in Force, if the Execution of them happen into ſome *Hands*, we know by Experience that there are a *thouſand* very ſmall *Matters*, of which any one, by the dexterous Management of the Gentlemen of *Doctors Commons*, is enough not only to ſtrip any Man of his Intereſt *in the Laws*, but ſend his Body to the *Goal*, and (in their apprehenſion) his *Soul to the Devil* to boot.

And who can but *Bluſh* to hear ſome People upbraid the *Romaniſts* with that Tenet, *That Faith is not to be kept with Hereticks* (which yet they, with the higheſt Aſſeverations, diſclaim) whilſt at the ſame time, *Themſelves* would have ſo many Laws kept on Foot, that give opportunity to every Villain to *cheat* any honeſt Man, by taking Advantage of his *Conſcientious Diſſent* in Matters of Religion, from the Eſtabliſh'd mode; witneſs the pleading of *Excommunication* in Bar of a juſt Action; And the Diſablement of ſo many to maintain any Suit at Law, or in Equity, unleſs they firſt both receive the *Sacrament* according to the Uſage of the *Church of England*, and take the *Teſt*.

But---*Parciùs iſta viris*---The Gentleman owns, That *the Church of* England *preſerving too long the bitter Taſte of that Uſage they had received in the times of our former Confuſions, ſacrific'd their Intereſt to their Revenge.* [A great Truth, I had almoſt ſaid, the *only one* in his Paper.] But now (quoth he) *they are ſenſible of their Miſtake, all their former Haughtineſs is for ever extinguiſh'd; Therefore you may ſecurely truſt them; That in the next Parliament* [If you Diſſenters will be Quiet, and ſuffer them to carry *Elections* as they pleaſe] *they will do you Reaſon; Ay, and* you *ſhall have* Liberty, *and the* Papiſts *never a* Bit.

Is there any Body that deſerves not to wear a *Muckender*, but muſt needs ſee through all this? What better Hopes can Diſſenters conceive of *another Parliament* of Bigotted Church-Men than of the *Laſt*, who were generally *ſtanch* that way? To go about to wheadle us with Promiſes of Liberty to *Proteſtants*, but excluſive of *Romaniſts*, is, at this time of day, ſuch a *palpable Banter*, as only ſhews the contemptible Opinion they have of the Diſſenters *Intellectuals*. Can it be imagined, That *the King* can ever paſs it? Would it not be extravagant *Rudeneſs* to offer it? Nay, have not They themſelves already by their Proxies made *Overtures* to the direct contrary?

To pretend now, That They were only the Inſtruments, not the *Authors* of the late Violences towards *Diſſenters*, as it expoſes their Prudence and Honeſty in the *Fact*, ſo it manifeſts their *Inſincerity* in the Excuſe; did they not *by Conſent* throughout the Nation both in *Pulpit*, *Prints*, and *Practices*, inſtigate and warrantize thoſe Outrages? Have we not ſeen them in Perſon animating *Informers*, and with their *own hands* in ſome places pulling down *Meeting-Houſes*.

Nay ſo high had the inveterate Venom ſwell'd, that even diſtreſſed *Forreign Proteſtants* felt part of its fury; for by ſome of their good Wills, none of the poor *Ruinated Hugenots*, ſhould have had any ſhare of that *Noble Charity* which *Royal Mercy* had allow'd to be Collected, and true Engliſh Bounty plentifully Contributed for their Relief; But they muſt notwithſtanding *ſtarve*, unleſs they would firſt conform to certain *Rituals*, which either they did not *underſtand*, or elſe could not be ſuppoſed (according to their Education) able in Conſcience to *comply with*, and ſo in flying *one Rape* upon their *Souls*, were dangerouſly expoſed to *another*.

Yet notwithſtanding all theſe too common and unwarrantable *Tranſports*, it muſt be acknowledged, there were divers of the *Eſtabliſhed Clergy* who kept themſelves free from that Epide-

Epidemical Infection of the *perſecuting Spirit*, who did Chriſtianly interpoſe, and venture far in their Endeavours to ſtem the impetuous Torrent: The Author of the ſeveral *Conformiſts Pleas for the Nonconformiſts*; The Reverend *Proteſtant Reconciler*; honeſt Mr. *B---lds*, and probably more than I have met with, did publickly appear in *Print*; And others in their *Sermons* and *Practices* declared their more healing and pacifick Principles. May their Names be never mentioned without Reſpect and Honour! May they never ſtand *in need* of that Compaſſion which they ſo bravely vouchſafed to others under Perſecution! May their *Memories* be had in perpetual Renown; and eſpecially let their *Moderation* for ever be imitated!

But as to the Generality of thoſe that pride themſelves with the Title of *Churchmen*, it cannot be denied, That as they reproach'd ſuch their *moderate Brethren* with the odious Nick-name of *Trimmers*, ſo themſelves went on *Jehu's Pace*, nothing but a ſtrict and ſevere Execution of all the moſt rigorous Laws would content them; They daily both irritated *Magiſtrates* and the *Skum* of the People to the *Holy Work*; At *Guild-Hall*-Chappel we have heard ſuch enflaming Rhetorick as this (ſpeaking of the Diſſenters) "Let them not call it "*Perſecution*, 'tis a juſt and neceſſary *Proſecution*, and the *moſt* "they can ſuffer, is the *leaſt* they *deſerve*. In purſuance of ſuch *Pulpit*-Maxims, Laws, tho *too harſh* in themſelves, were wyre-drawn abundantly further than the apparent Intent of the Makers. Common Juſtice denied to any that appeared under the Character of Diſſenters; palpable Perjuries wink't at; *Riots* made not only of the moſt peaceable Aſſemblies to worſhip God, but of the *Friendly Viſits* of Relations; Nay where the *ſmall Number* found, were not ſufficient to colour *a Legal Proſecution* on that pretence, *a Servant* attending one that came to ſurprize them, has been *clapt in for a Party* in the Indictment, and an *Outragious Fine* thereupon enforced to be paid

paid; As in the Case of a *worthy Citizen* near *London-Bridge*; How Juries *Brow-beaten*, and forc'd to present Men on the 23 *Eliz.* contrary to their Consciences; Some troubled on a *double* Conviction before two several Magistrates for one and the same Offence; The *Fines* frequently Extravagant, as one Man at a Sessions in *Surrey* was compell'd to pay down 100 pound, for being at one Meeting. In brief, *no Wood* came amiss to make *Arrows* of, for the Destruction of the *Dissenters*; *Delenda erat Carthago*, all *Nonconformists* were to be ruined in all places, after the Example of *Bristol &c.*

At this pass matters stood when his Majesty vouchsafed to hold forth his *Golden Scepter*, and put a stop to all these *Outrages* and *Calamities:* And what Security does this unknown Author give us, that it may not be so again one day, if these Penal Laws be not utterly removed? How does it appear that the Sentiments of the Church of *England* towards Dissenters are chang'd, unless it be to a greater degree of Malice? Or that their Haughtiness is for ever extinct, but rather encreased? For example, but Ten miles up the *Thames*, a good while since the Declaration, a Parson refus'd to Bury a Child, because Baptized by a *Nonconformist*-Minister, so that all the Company assembled for the Funeral were forc'd to depart, and the Infant's Corps to be kept above Ground all Night; And hardly would he be induced by any Entreaties to permit its Interment the next day, and then too without vouchsafing his *Reverencies* Presence.

I would not file particular Mens Failures to the Reproach of a Community amongst whom are so many *Learned worthy* Men; But this I cannot forbear to say, That if the Church of *England* would be credited, she ought publickly declare against the *Persecuting Spirit*, and make her *Repentance* as notorious as the *Scandal:* Whereas her contesting so stifly for the Continuance of the *Penal Laws*, argues too *broadly* that she still retains the *very same* Inclinations.

And indeed this mighty *Stir* and *Outcry* of keeping up the *Teſts*, or elſe we *are all undone*, is no more than that of old, *Great is Diana of the Epheſians!* For by theſe *Laws* and *Teſts* the *Churchmen* (though but *one* Part, and that not the greateſt, of the Nation) have not only engroſſed and ſecured to themſelves all the *Preferments* and *Offices*, all Places of *Profit*, *Honour*, and *Truſt* throughout the Kingdom; but alſo an opportunity of Ruinating all, or any of the *other Parties* at pleaſure. Theſe are *too ſweet* Morſels to be diſgorg'd without ſome *Reluctancy*; And they may be excus'd in *Policy*, if they uſe *all Efforts* to continue their Enjoyment, or Hopes at leaſt, of ſuch *abſolute Advantages*; but in the mean time the *Diſſenters* will be *unpardonably remiſs*, if they hearken to the Voice of theſe *Charmers*, and neglect ſuch an opportunity of *Enfranchizing* Themſelves and Poſterity.

Nor can I imagine what our Author means by that *Hectoring Rhodomantado*, pag. 12. How his *Church can in a moment bring Clouds again, and turn the Royal Thunder upon the Diſſenters heads, Blow them off the Stage in a Breath, if She would give but a Smile, or a kind word: That the leaſt Glimpſe of her Compliance would throw them back into a ſtate of Suffering, and draw upon them all the Arrears of Severity which have accrued during this time of Kindneſs to them:---But She will not allow her ſelf to be reſcued* [From what?] *by ſuch unjuſtifiable means, but chuſeth to bear the Weight of Power, rather than lie under the Burthen of being Criminal.* And to the ſame purpoſe he talks elſewhere, That his Church *had the firſt Courtſhips, which ſhe rejected, and is ready to ſuffer, rather than receive all Advantages that can be gained by a Criminal Compliance.*---Now beſides the moſt inſolent Aſperſion hereby thrown on his Majeſty (as if he were rather her *Servant* than her *Soveraign*) that ſhe can ſo eaſily induce him to violate his *ſolemn Promiſes* for her Pleaſure; I would gladly learn what this expected and ſo much courted *Smile* might be, that can perform

perform *such Miracles?* What it was *His Church* refuſed, rather than *criminally* comply with?

Was it that her *Sons* ſhould *all turn Papiſts?* This indeed would notably vary the Scene of Affairs, and by caſting the *Over-ballance* to that Party, alter the *Politick Intereſt*; and yet, even in ſuch caſe, the *Diſſenters* would truſt *God's Providence* and the *King's Word* for their Security.

Is it that they ſhould *conſent to Repeal all the Penal Laws againſt Roman Catholicks*, with a Reſerve of thoſe againſt *Proteſtant Diſſenters?* I am much more confident there never was any ſuch *ſhameful partial* Dealing propoſed unto them, than I am, that it was never *voluntarily offered* by them.

But if it ſhould be true, that they have made *frank Overtures* to *reſcind* the Laws againſt the *Romaniſts*, and ſecure them in the *next Reign*, Provided themſelves might be continued in their Proſecuting *Proteſtant Diſſenters* in this; and that the ſame was rejected with a generous Indignation worthy of ſuch a *Propoſition*: Then it will not be difficult to gueſs both at the Nature and Prevalency of their boaſted *Smiles*, and what Kindneſs *Diſſenters* are to expect at their Hands, notwithſtanding all their fair Pretenſions.

Either the Church of *England* oppoſeth *Liberty of Conſcience* in general, and then juſtly engageth the Body of the Nation againſt her; or only *That* of *Roman Catholicks*, and then they recede from their own Principles; for it cannot be forgot that they heretofore told the *Diſſenters*, There was as much Reaſon the *Roman Catholicks* ſhould be Tolerated as *They*: And to confirm it, many of her Communion frequently declared, That *they would rather be* Romans *than* Presbyterians.

But it may ſtill be urg'd, That the Church of *England* is now no more for *Perſecuting*, and would be content to give up all the *Penal Laws* on either ſide; but cannot, *dares not* part with the *TESTS*; eſpecially the laſt, whereby onely

Roman Catholicks are kept out of *Parliament*. For if She quit *this Guard*, preſently the *Two Houſes* may be full of *Roman Catholicks*, who will eſtabliſh their Religion *by Law*, or perhaps pretend it actually in Poſſeſſion *Jure Poſtliminii*: And ſo the *Proteſtant Religion* ſhall be utterly *ſuppreſs'd*, and the Writ, *De Hæretico comburendo*, revived, &c.

This is the *Topping Objection*; but I think a very ſatisfactory *Anſwer* may be given to it: For,

1. Not to repeat what has already been offered of the *King's Promiſes*, the *Paucity* of the *Romaniſts*, and how their *Intereſt* ſtands in proſpect of Futurity; I cannot but *remind* you, that no Body that I have met with, ſuppoſes the removal of the *Teſts*, without ſome *equipollent Proviſion* in the very ſame *Act*, that may obviate theſe Fears. And 'tis inconceivable that the Wiſdom of the Nation ſo Refined, ſhould yet be ſo barren, as not to be able to contrive ſome *Civil Security* as ſtrong and ſafe, without *Hampering* of *Conſcience*: For, Why may there not be a *Civil Teſt* form'd, altogether as effectual, and yet not ſo obnoxious to *Exceptions*, as theſe *Religious Ones*?

2. If we can ſecure due *Elections* and regular *Returns*, we are ſafe; for undoubtedly the *Free-holders*, *Citizens* and *Burghers* of *England*, are not very fond of chuſing *Roman Catholicks* for their *Repreſentatives*.

3. As to any Apprehenſions, that by taking away theſe Laws, the *Roman* ſhould pretend a Right to be the *National*, Eſtabliſh'd *Religion*, by vertue of any *Antiquated Statutes*; that may eaſily be daſh't by an *Eſtabliſhment* or Confirmation of the *preſent Church of England*, as to all its Priviledges, but ſuch as are *Compulſory* by Temporal *Penalties*, altogether unadequat means to ſecure *Religion*, and unneceſſary to the *Well-Being* of a *Goſpel-Church*.

4. What if in the ſame *Bill* that Vacates all the *Old Penal Laws*, it be by the King in *Parliament*, aſſerted and declared,

That

That *Liberty of Conſcience* is part of the *Conſtitution* of this Kingdom? The Natural Birth-Right of every *Engliſh Man*. And that all Perſons endeavouring to undermine or ſubvert ſuch *Settlement*, ſhall be adjudg'd *Criminal*, and liable to ſuch *Penalties* as ſhall be thought fit; all *Acts* tending thereunto, in themſelves *Ab initio*, and for ever *Void*; and every Member of *either Houſe* of Parliament, obliged before he *Sits* or *Acts*, ſolemnly to make ſome ſuch *Declaration*.

5. Or what if all the *Penal Laws*, together with the *Teſt*, debarring from *Offices* and *Imployments*, be Abrogated, and onely that relating to Members of Parliament be kept on foot?

Will none of theſe *Expedients*, or ſuch *better* ones as may be contriv'd, allay your Fears?

That which alone muſt conclude any honeſt Man's *Judgment*, is the Reſolution of this *ſingle Queſtion*:

Whether Perſecution in it ſelf be *Lawful*? That is, whether for meer Opinions, or Exerciſe of Religious Worſhip, tho different from the National Form, yet no ways diſturbing the Publick *Peace*, injuring *Civil Society*, or violating *Morality*, any Perſons whatſoever ought according to the *Law of God* or *Nature*, be Puniſh'd by *Death*, *Baniſhment*, *Mulcts*, *Fines*, or *Impriſonments*, or be rendred liable unto any *Forfeitures* of, or *Preclusions* from thoſe Advantages and Priviledges, which otherwiſe they might juſtly pretend to, or ought to enjoy?

They, and *They onely*, that will undertake to juſtify the *Affirmative*, may reaſonably appear for the Continuance of the *Penal Laws and Teſts*. But then, if they aſſert any kind of Perſecution to be Lawful, they ought alſo to tell us the *Bounds and Limits* of it, why the Penalties may not be *ſanguinary* as well as *pecuniary*, *poſitive* as well as *privative*? why we may not *Burn* a Man for his ſuppoſed Error in *Religion*, as well as take away his *Goods*, *or his Birth-right*? On

On the other ſide, all *Thoſe* who cannot but acknowledg ſuch *Statutes*, and all Proſecutions thereupon, to be *Unwarrantable*, as being againſt the main Tendency of the *Goſpel*, contrary to our Lord's Rule of, *Doing as we would be done by*, and oppoſite to the Maxims of *Reaſon* and *Civil Policy*, are bound in *Conſcience* as well as *Intereſt*, to declare and uſe their uttermoſt Endeavours for the *Abolition* of all theſe burthenſom deſtructive Laws.

Nor will they be affrighted with any imagined bad *Conſequences*, or a Noiſe of what Advantages *ill Men* may deſign to make by ſuch a *Repeal*; for as we are not to do *Evil*, that Good may come on't, ſo we muſt not omit *doing Right*, whatever may be the *Sequel*. Let us perform *our Duty*, and then we may reſt aſſured, that Divine *Providence*, which ſuperintends all the Affairs of this fading World, will diſſipate the Councils of any *Architophels*, and either preſerve us *from*, or ſupport us *under* the worſt they can *contrive*.

But if the *Diſſenters* wilfully loſe this Opportunity which *God* and the *King* have graciouſly vouchſafed; and ſhall in Diſtruſt of *Providence*, as well as his Majeſties *Word*, multiply to themſeves groundleſs *Fears*; and for certain ſuppoſed *Politick Ends*, quit both their *Duty* and *Intereſt*, to rely on *Egyptian Reeds*, and future *improbable Expectancies*, the Courteſie of a ſort of People, whoſe tendereſt *Mercies* they have found to be Cruel; and will aſſiſt to continue thoſe very Statutes which their *own Conſciences* cannot but tell them, are *Irreligious* and *Unjuſt*, and under the Laſh of which they have ſo lately and ſo *ſeverely Smarted*; and by reaſon of this *reſolute Error* againſt their own *Convictions* and *Experience*, ſhall happen hereafter to fall under a more *dreadful Perſecution*, than ever heretofore; ('tis no matter by *whoſe Hand:*) Muſt they not with Confuſion of Face, acknowledg they have juſtly *deſerved it?* and that themſelves have chiefly contributed to their own Miſeries, and entail'd a *Plague* on all ther Poſterity?

He

He who is convinced, that Perſecution for Religion is *unlawful*, and yet refuſes to contribute all he can towards removing thoſe Laws (which either *poſitively* or *privately*, for they both depend on the ſame Bottom) injoyn ſuch Perſecution; let him pretend what Fears and *Jealouſies* he will of enſuing Dangers from the doing of it, I know not how to excuſe him from the juſt Imputation of being either a *Fool* or an *Atheiſt*.

'Tis true, our Orator aſſerts, That *'tis as juſtifiable to have NO RELIGION as wilfully to throw away the* humane Means *of preſerving it*. But becauſe I always thought Religion was beſt to be preſerved by *Religious Methods*, and that a Church built upon the Rock, needs not the feeble Supports of *Civil Force*; I would gladly learn what *Humane Means* are neceſſary or Expedient, or indeed *adæquate* to preſerve true Religion? Sure I am the *Chriſtian Religion* held up its Head, not only *without*, but *againſt ſuch Means* for the firſt *Centuries*; and yet *then* it was that it moſt *flouriſh'd in purity*, and ſpread it ſelf throughout the World; but as ſoon as Politicians would be adding their *Humane Means* to preſerve it, and interwove it with *Intereſt of State*, from thence we commonly date its *Declenſion*.

In a word, if it be the Intereſt both of the Papiſts of this Nation, and of all *Proteſtant Diſſenters*, to have a General *Liberty of Conſcience* firmly ſetled: If this be no real Diſadvantage to the *Church of England*, but only keeps her from *engroſſing* all Offices and Employments, which cauſed her to be *envied*; and from ruining her innocent Neighbours, which made her *hated*; and is both her *Guilt* and *her Shame*: If by the Goſpel, no Man is to be abridged of any of his *Civil-Rights* for his different Opinion in Religion; Since we may have *as good Security* for the enjoyment of *this Liberty for ever* as we our ſelves can reaſonably contrive; ſince we have felt and found ſo many *Evils* attending *Perſecution*, and never

any

any *Good*, It ſeems to me Unaccountable why we ſhould not *all* readily and harmoniouſly agree to the Total Extirpation of all *Teſts* and *Penal Laws* for Religion, and heartily endeavour the *Eſtabliſhment* of that *Univerſal Liberty*, which only can render the Nation laſtingly *Quiet* and *Happy*.

I am not ſo unacquainted with the *ill-natur'd World*, as not to foreſee, that for this free Publication of my Thoughts, I muſt expect to encountre a thouſand *Scandals* and *Calumnies*; But----

——Hic Murus ahœnus eſto,
Nil conſcire ſibi.

Being conſcious of nothing but an *unbiaſs'd honeſt* Intention, I can ſmile at, and pitty the *impotent Malice* of *falſe Reports*. Having taken up that reſolution of *Quinctius Cincinnatus*——*Vellem equidem vobis* placere, *Quirites! Sed multo malo vos* ſalvos eſſe, *qualicunque erga me animo ſitis futuri*

THE END.